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ABSTRACT

Focused on research concerning children and television, this annotated bibliography lists 44 articles selected from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database from 1983 to 1988. Topics include: (1) the effects of television violence on children; (2) television viewing patterns; (3) children's television programs; and (4) television as a tool for teaching. (MM)

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing magnitude of television viewing and the options for choice available to children have created an exciting challenge for school practitioners.

Typically, by the time children have graduated from high school they will have spent more time on viewing television than on any other activity, with the exception of sleep.

The TV smorgasbord is augmented by VCR's and home videos and cable, in addition to the standard programming. Public libraries are now shelving CD's and videotapes for circulation; rental stores for videos are commonplace; and the selection pool continues to grow.

It is estimated that 40% of U. S. households owned a VCR in 1987. Media analyst Paul Kagan anticipates that this percentage will rise to 70% by the early 1990's. Similarly, dollar sales and unit sales of prerecorded videocasettes have doubled in the past four years, and it is expected that this trend will continue.

Instructional softwear has been developed and marketed quickly in response to the rapidly advancing technology. So rapidly, in fact, that educators have had little time to evaluate this new tool. Deeper understanding of how this medium can affect cognitive and developmental processes will enable us to help children develop keen discrimination in their choices for viewing.

Added to the complexity of the task facing educators is the fact that children often are using video technology more than their parents. Children have adapted very quickly to learning how to operate TV sets, remote controls, joy sticks, etc., and know how to select programs at will. They do so with surprising dexterity, even at the age of two.

The challenge is great. The medium entertains, informs, and, in all cases, instructs - whether instruction is intended or not. Educators and parents know this and strive to understand more fully the impact of TV viewing on children's learning, attitudes, and behavior.

The publications listed in this bibliography were selected from the ERIC data base in an attempt to describe literature over the past five years that may be useful to educators and parents concerned with the issues surrounding children and television. This list is by no means complete, but may serve as a starting point for those wishing to delve into this topic.

Doris Hedlund Christo

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abelman, Robert. "Learning to Learn TV Cues and TVQs." Television & Children, Sum-Fall, 1984, pp. 13-17.

Production techniques that convey nonverbal messages are described. Interviews with five- to nine-year olds demonstrate that understanding these nonverbal messages is a learned phenomenon. Children's programming implications are also discussed.

Abelman, Robert et al. "Children, Television and Families - An Evolution in Understanding. Part I: 1978-1983." Television and Families, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1986, pp. 2-60.

The National Council for Families and Television (NCFT) discusses articles that appeared in their journal publications from 1978-1983 which examined both television and children. Reports on the evolution of NCFT's understanding of this relationship.

Abelman, Robert and Sparks, Glenn. "How to Tell the Good Guys from the Bad Guys." Television and Families, 1985, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 21-24.

By their descriptions of television characters, first, third, and fifth-graders demonstrate that television offers a limited repertoire of good guy characteristics, and show the important age-related differences in judgments on television personalities.

Alexander, Alison et al. "Creating a Learning Context: Investigations on the Interaction of Siblings during Television Viewing." Critical Studies in Mass Communication, December, 1984, pp. 345-64.

Study concludes that children are not passive and unresponsive recipients of television. Research methodology included a case study and a participant observation study.

Alexander, Alison and Carveth, Rod. "From Sesame Street to Port Charles: Children's Viewing of Soap Operas." Television & Children, Sum-Fall, 1984, pp. 28-30.

Describes and compares a study of third, fourth, and fifth graders' soap opera viewing habits to motivation, age, gender, and what children learn about relationships from viewing. Offers suggestions for additional research.

Alperowicz, Cynthia. Fighting TV Stereotypes. An ACT Handbook. Newtonville, MA., Action for Children's Television, 1983, 24 pp.

This booklet demonstrates the ways minorities, women, handicapped people, and the elderly are disproportionately portrayed on television. The report reviews what is wrong with current representation and suggests strategies for affirmative action efforts.

Anderson, Daniel R. The Influence of Television on Children's Attentional Abilities. Children's Television Workshop, New York, December, 1985.

A review of 10 studies reveals that viewing television in general and viewing "Sesame Street" in particular may affect attentional abilities in children. The effects appear to be positive as well as negative; "Sesame Street" in particular is associated with positive effects.

Baron, Lois J. "Televised Literacy Curriculum in Action: A Long-Term Study." Journal of Educational Television, 1985, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 49-55.

Fifth-graders are the subjects of a media literacy project that provides them with hands-on approach to television form and the nature of message transmission to improve their understanding of concepts related to media.

Bishop, Jay. "T.V. Watching Styles: Learning to Reject That Which is Crass and Ugly." International Journal of Early Childhood, 1984, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 17-19.

Study reports a comparison of children uncritically viewing television with children who have been provided with skills for discovering meaning within the program and beyond. Suggestions are given to encourage more critical viewing.

Blosser, Betsy J. and Roberts, Donald F. "Age Differences in Children's Perceptions of Message Intent: Responses to TV News, Commercials, Educational Spots, and Public Service Announcements." Communication Research: An International Quarterly, 1985, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 455-84.

Study focuses on the development of children's ability to distinguish among informational, instructional, and persuasive television messages.

Bronstein-Greenwald, Eva M. and Waxman, Ilene A. "Children's Ads Don't Just Sell, They also Teach Language Well." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, 76th, Providence, Rhode Island, May 2-5, 1985.

A content analysis of children's television commercials is conducted to determine if this form of mass media can be used to stimulate language skills in children. Thirty-six commercials from children's classic cartoons that air before children go to school are examined for language skills.

Bryant, Jennings, and Anderson, Daniel R. Children's Understanding of Television: Research on Attention and Comprehension. New York, Academic Press, Inc., 1983, 370 pp.

This literature review cites the major research studies on the basic nature of children's television viewing. The studies specifically cover children's actions, reactions, processing, recall, and learning to view television. This is a significant compilation and makes suggestions to future researchers on specific areas on which to continue to focus.

Choat, Ernest and Griffin, Harry. "Young Children, Television and Learning: Part 1. The Effects of Children Watching a Continuous Off-Air Broadcast. Part 2. Comparison of the Effects of Reading and Story Telling by the Teacher and Television Story Viewing." Journal of Education Television, 1986, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 79-104.

The University of London examines children's comprehension when viewing a continuous television program and compares classroom reading of stories with viewing of stories on television.

Condry, John and Keith, Douglas. "Educational and Recreational Uses of Computer Technology: Computer Instruction and Video Games." Youth and Society, September, 1983, pp. 87-112.

The availability of computers to the young raises a new series of questions on the impact of this new technology on young children.

Congress of the U. S. Children and Television. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection, and Finance of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives. Ninety-Eight Congress, First Session. Serial No. 98-3. Congress of the U. S., Washington, D.C., March 16, 1983, 221 pp.

Addresses the general topic of television and its impact on children and includes suggestions for improving children's television. The hearing was held during National Children and Television Week and drew statements and testimony from networks, producers, advocacy groups, the entertainment industry, and the National Education Association.

Congress of the U. S. Potential of Television in Educating Children. Joint Hearing before the Subcommittee on Telecommunications, Consumer Protection, and Finance of the Committee on Energy Commerce and the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor. House of Representatives. Ninety-Eighth Congress, First Session. Washington, D. C., October 5, 1983, 109 pp.

Ways in which television can have a positive impact on children's education, what we know about the impacts of television programming on children, and suggestions as to what Congress can do to promote positive educational values in television programming are supported by testimony presented at this hearing.

Fakouri, M. Embrahim. "Television and the Young Viewer." Contemporary Education, Summer, 1984, pp. 216-19.

Demonstrates that critical viewing skills are necessary for children to distinguish between fantasy and reality, and to understand the motives of the network sponsor.

Fetler, Mark. "Television Viewing and School Achievement." Journal of Communication, Spring, 1984, pp. 104-18.

The interrelation of the amount of television viewing, socioeconomic status, study habits, and home environment on sixth-graders' achievements is studied and achievements in mathematics, reading, and written expression are measured. The study concludes that more than six hours of television viewing per day results in significantly lower achievement scores in all three content areas.

Garrett, Candace and Marshall, Patricia M. Cognition in Fifth and Sixth Grade Children. Skills Essential to Learning Television Project: Working Paper. Agency for Instructional Television, Bloomington, Indiana, 1977, 26 pp.

Report describes the cognition processes of fifth- and sixth-grade children in very specific terms, e.g., how children interpret what they see and hear, how they remember, and how they reason and solve problems. Report used by the staff of the Skills Essential to Learning Television Project, a multilevel series of video and print resources for classroom use.

Heinz, John. "National Leadership for Children's Television." American Psychologist, July, 1983, pp. 817-19.

Argues that the significant impact of television on children mandates a strong national leadership to work for high quality in children's television programming.

Holosko, M. J. et al. "Why Teenagers Watch Television: Implications for Educational Television." Journal of Educational Television, 1983, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 57-62.

Reviews research into teenage viewing preferences prior to production of a television series for CITY-TV, Toronto. The resulting effects on instructional television programming design are discussed.

Honig, Alice Sterling. "Research in Review: Television and Young Children." Young Children, May, 1983, pp. 63-76.

Describes the effects of television on various aspects of children's behavior, including learning through passive viewing. The report concludes by citing the effects of television on family life and suggests ways in which parents and teachers can improve their management of children's television viewing.

Huston, Aletha C. et al. "Cognitive Development and Home Environment as Predictors of Children's Attention to Television." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C., August 22-26, 1986.

Two-year longitudinal study reveals that children in homes that experience heavy diets of general television programs learn habits of inattention.

Huston, Aletha C. et al. The Development of Television Viewing Patterns in Early Childhood: A Longitudinal Investigation, 1987, 29 pp..

Two Hundred and Seventy-one children are followed in two-year longitudinal investigation of developing television viewing patterns. The subjects are from 3 to 5 or 5 to 7 years of age. Parents maintain diaries for one week in the spring and one week in the fall for two years. Several classifications and variables are used. The study demonstrates the peaks of television viewing by age and sex, in different classifications, viz., viewing cartoons and general audience comedies, adult informational programs, child audience programs, action adventure, etc.

Jonsson, Annelis. "TV: A Threat or a Complement to School?" Journal of Educational Television, 1986, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 29-38.

Relationships between children's use of television and (1) parents' attitudes toward such use and (2) children's school performance are the basis of this longitudinal study.

Lorch, Elizabeth Pugzles. "Young Children's Memory for Televised Stories: Effects of Importance." Child Development, April, 1987, pp. 453-63.

Two experiments provide the data for a study which measures the effects of plot-relevant information on the memory of 4- to 6-year olds.

Lonner, Walter J. et al. "The Influence of Television on Measured Cognitive Abilities: A Study with Native Alaskan Children." Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, September, 1985, pp. 355-80.

Assesses the effects of commercial television, installed in 1977, on the Inupiat Eskimo group and the Tilingit and Haida Indians. Age, sex, culture area, and amount of television watched are among the predictor variables.

Luke, Carmen. "Television Discourse Processing: A Schema Theoretic Approach." Communication Education, April, 1985, pp. 91-105.

Distinguishes between cause-effect and interactive research models that are used to explain television's effects on children. Proposes a schema theory of comprehension and learning. Proposal accepts child's prior knowledge, perceives television viewing as active communication, and stresses critical and literate viewing instruction.

Luke, Carmen. "UPDATE: Television and Children: A Bibliography." Canadian Journal of Educational Communication, November, 1985, pp. 8-15.

Describes qualitative research that seeks a more comprehensive, contextual account of children's television viewing. Items include viewing time, family role, habit modification, fright reaction, commercials, affective and language development, and content of children's television program.

Morgan, Michael and Rothschild, Nancy. "Impact of the New Television Technology: Cable TV, Peers, and Sex-Role Cultivation in the Electronic Environment." Youth and Society, September, 1983, pp. 33-50.

Analyzes the conditioning roles of peer groups and home cable viewing (a traditional socializing agent vs. a new socializing agent) in the relationship between television viewing and adolescents' sex-role images.

Murray, John P. and Lonnborg, Barbara. Children and Television...A Primer for Parents Revised. Boys Town, Nebraska, 1984, 16 pp.

Reviews the research findings on the impact of television on children and provides a guide to parents on ways to moderate television's influence. This position paper includes issues ranging from the effect of the quantity of time children spend viewing television; violence on TV; fantasy vs. reality; stereotypes; to commercials and advertising on television.

Pearl, David. "Violence and Aggression." Society, Sept.-Oct., 1984, pp. 15-16.

Cites research and data about the effects of television violence on viewers, with special emphasis on children.

Pezdek, Kathy. "Is Watching TV Passive, Uncreative, or Addictive? Debunking Some Myths." Television and Families, 1985, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 41-46.

Myths regarding the cognitive processing of television and its effects on children and adults are discussed and compared with relevant research findings.

Pingree, Suzanne et al. "Another Look at Children's Comprehension of Television." Communication Research: An International Quarterly, October, 1984, pp. 477-96.

"Diff'rent Strokes" is the focus of a study of three- to five-year-olds who view an eight-minute version of the program and then are asked to reenact the story with dolls and props. The study concludes that 70 percent of the children understand most of the event clusters of the program.

Richards, David M. Utilizing Community Resources to Decrease Unsupervised Television Viewing by Kindergarten Children. Ed.D. practicum paper, Nova University, March 4, 1985, 85 pp.

Teaching parents ways to supervise their kindgergarten-aged children in watching television and setting guidelines for viewing time is the goal of this practicum. Teachers are also counseled about strategies to supplement information provided to parents about appropriate programs for children. The practicum discusses data gathering and research methodology.

Rubinstein, Eli A. "Television and Behavior: Research Conclusions of the 1982 NIMH Report and Their Policy Implications." American Psychologist, July, 1983, pp. 820-25.

Cites recent studies which indicate that television has significantly influenced cognitive and affective child development, social behavior, social relationships, and health attitudes and practices. Argues for collaboration by researchers and the television industry to maximize positive effects.

Singer, Jerome L. et al. "Family Patterns and Television Viewing as Predictors of Children's Beliefs and Aggression." Journal of Communication, Spring, 1984, pp. 73-89.

Longitudinal study somewhat indicates that heavy television viewing is significantly associated with later aggressive behavior, restlessness, and belief in a "mean and scary world" on the part of schoolchildren.

Singer, Jerome L. and Singer, Dorothy C. "Family Experiences and Television Viewing as Predictors of Children's Imagination, Restlessness, and Aggression." Journal of Social Issues, 1986, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 107-124.

Preschool and early school-aged children are the subjects of a report which studies some of the ways television may influence imagination motor activity, and aggressiveness.

Storm, Susan Ruotsala. "Children's Learning from Broadcast Television: The Relationship between the Amount of Time a Child Watches Television with and without Adults and that Child's Learning from Television." Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Anaheim, California, January 17-23, 1985.

Research examines young children's learning from specific television program content across subject matter, and the relationship of that learning with or without adults present.

Watkins, Bruce. "Television Viewing as a Dominant Activity of Childhood: A Suggestion for a Developmental Effects Theory." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, California, May, 1984, 20 pp.

Argues that, instead of emphasizing the negative impact of TV on developing minds, TV viewing can be thought of as simply one other childhood activity and should be examined in that light - from a developmental perspective.

Watkins, Bruce. "Communicating Research Findings to Television's Creative Community: Public Policy and the Impact of Educational Television." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 68tducational Television." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 68th, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 23-27, 1984, 20 pp.

Ongoing project is established to review and provide results of research on children and television to those responsible for commercial and educational children's television and to ameliorate the tension between the academic and creative communities.

Windahl, Sven, et al. "Adolescents without Television: A Study in Media 786786 Deprivation." Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 1986, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 47-63.

A Swedish television strike in 1980 made possible a media deprivation study of 215 adolescents, demonstrating dependency/affinity with the medium, alternatives to media consumption, and reasons for using television.

Wright, John C. et al. "Pace and Continuity of Television Programs: Effects on Children's Attention and Comprehension." Developmental Psychology, July, 1984, pp. 653-66.

Measures the differences in children's attention to television programs that vary in pace and continuity, and evaluates recall of the temporal sequence of program events.

Wright, John C. and Huston, Aletha C. "A Matter of Form: Potentials for Young Viewers." American Psychologist, July, 1983, pp. 835-43.

Reviews research findings on the effects of television on cognitive and social development and suggests that television can be a powerful and positive tool for teaching and communicating with young children.